



**AUSTRALIAN
PRO BONO CENTRE**

MEDIA RELEASE
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**REVIEW OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES RECOGNISES IMPORTANCE OF
RESOURCING TO LEVERAGE PRO BONO SUPPORT**

The Australian Pro Bono Centre welcomes the announcement today by the NSW Government of new funding for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in NSW based on the recommendations of the *2017 Review of NSW Community Legal Centre Services* led by Mr Alan Cameron AO (Review Report) also released today.

The Centre particularly welcomes the findings in the Review Report that:

- CLCs need adequate resources to harness, co-ordinate and supervise pro bono and volunteer support;
- students, volunteers and pro bono partnerships make a significant contribution to the CLC sector; and
- this multiplies the value of government funding and increases the benefits of legal assistance services experienced by individuals and the community.

“For CLCs to take full advantage of the available pro bono support, they often need to provide coordination, training, supervision and other support. This cost is often underestimated and unrecognised,” said John Corker, CEO of the Australian Pro Bono Centre.

The Centre’s work has shown that good coordination and training are vital components of a successful pro bono relationship, whether with an individual volunteer or a law firm. There can be a considerable cost associated with managing such relationships, particularly for larger projects.

“With many firms being reliant on their ability to partner with CLCs to deliver their pro bono services, it’s important to have a formal recognition of the cost to firms and CLCs of establishing and maintaining these partnerships,” Mr Corker said.

Unmet legal need

Importantly the Review Report highlights gaps in service delivery, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas of NSW, and a need for more legal assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, children and young people, and people with disabilities.

According to the Review Report the areas of law seen as most pressing in terms of unmet need are in the areas of child care and protection, housing, credit and debt, domestic violence and consumer law.

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